

POLICY STATEMENT

Subject:

ENVIRONMENT

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Approving Official:

Douglas J. Smith

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

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The Environmental Policy Statement has been constructed utilizing a general comprehensive framework with a general stated introduction and specific sub-sections dealing with specific areas of concern. The Environmental Policy Statement is as specific as is necessary to get the job done and yet general enough to cover most activities without continual revision.

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A. GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

It is the purpose of this statement to clarify to the staff of this agency, to others with whom we deal, and to the public at large our policies regarding environmental matters. That environmental concern has become stylish in the early seventies is an understatement. The purpose of this statement of policy is not to clamber aboard and join the crowd, but to articulate and hence better understand and implement those policy decisions made in recent years which provide at least the potential for impact upon some portion of our environment.

Certainly it would be well to initially define the environment as we refer to it here. The environment may include all physical, biological, and social systems that surround, affect, and react to us and our activities.

To ensure that the reader has some understanding of the relationship of this agency to the environment it would be well to mention several points made in the Codes of Montana. Several pieces of legislation in recent years, as well as other mandates, have placed this agency in the position of relating to the environment.

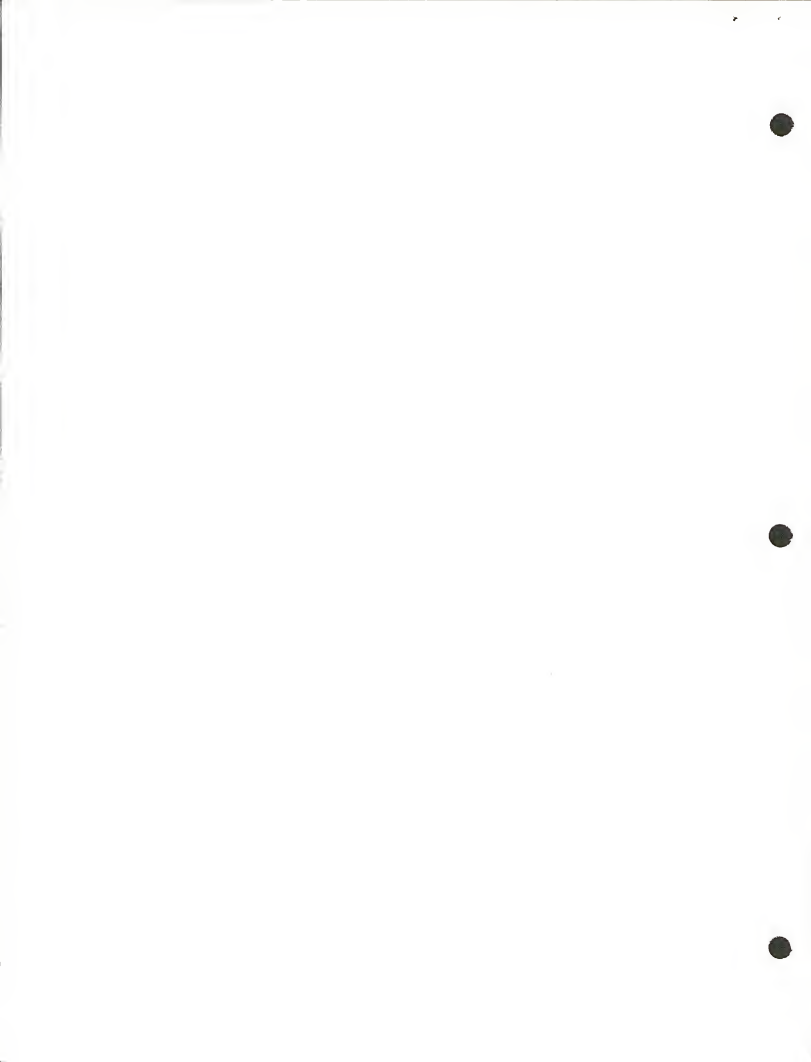
The following are excerpted from the "Montana Water Resources Act of 1967":

"The State, in the exercise of its sovereign power, acting through the Water Resources Board, hereinafter created, shall co-ordinate development and use of the water resources of the state so as to effect full utilization, conservation, and protection of its water resources."

"It is necessary to co-ordinate local, state, and federal water resource development and utilization plans and projects through a single agency of state government, hereinafter created and to be known as the 'Montana Water Resources Board'."

"To achieve these objectives, and to protect the waters of Montana from diversion to other areas of the nation, it is essential that a comprehensive, co-ordinated multiple-use water resource plan be progressively formulated, to be known as the 'state water plan'."

Surely it is impossible to coordinate development and use of the water resources of the state, to coordinate local, state and federal water resources development and utilization plans and projects, and to formulate a comprehensive coordinated multiple-



use water resource plan for the State of Montana, without being involved in the environment.

In addition to the broad-based mandate found in the Montana Water Resources Act of 1967, the Montana Water Resources Board either administers or advises the administration of the Flood Plain Management Act of 1971, the Groundwater Code, the Weather Modification Act, the Water Pollution Act, the Mined Land Reclamation Act, and the Mosquito Vector Control Act.

This agency has been and shall continue to be deeply committed to sensible uses of Montana's water as it relates to the total environment of the State of Montana.

This agency shall make every effort to cooperate with any person or agency who expresses a similar interest regarding the relationship of Montana's water to the environment.

This statement and the following sub-statements represent this agency's expression of its commitment to the total environment of the State of Montana, and an articulation of its specific policies relating to the environment.



B. SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY SUB-STATEMENT

SECTION 1: ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

GENERAL

The Montana Water Resources Board shall maintain an Environmental Coordinating Committee composed of various Environmentally oriented disciplines within their staff. Individuals named to the Committee shall be at the discretion of the Director of the Montana Water Resources Board. Committee Members shall remain on the Committee until relieved by the Director. Committee Members shall all name substitutes that will act in their places on all Committee assignments. Chairman of the Committee shall be the Environmental Coordinator. Meeting times and dates shall be set by the Chairman of the Committee and shall be held as needed to conduct all Committee business. No less than one Committee meeting per month shall be required. All business conducted during the meeting shall be taped or dictated and distributed to Committee Members.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Environmental Coordinating Committee shall advise but not dictate Environmental Policy of the Montana Water Resources Board. This advisement shall be directed to the M.W.R.B. Director, his Staff, and/or Division Directors.

MAJOR ITEMS PROCESSED BY THE COMMITTEE

The following items shall be handled by the Environmental Coordinating Committee:

1. Review Environmental Impact Statements (originated by other agencies, federal and state). Impact Statements shall be directed to the Committee Chairman who will immediately establish a file for the project. He will also write a reply letter for the Director's signature, stating that the Impact Statement has been received by the Water Resources Board and it will be reviewed and returned to the initiating agency by a specified date. The Committee Chairman will make copies of the Impact Statement, distribute those to the Committee Members, and set a date for Committee Review. The Committee meeting will be held to review the Impact Statement. Oral and written notes will be submitted and a project leader will be assigned. The project leader will be an individual with major interests in the particular statements or have knowledge in a geographical area of the impact area. The project leader will compile the oral and written notes into rough draft form. This rough draft will be copied for Committee Members review and reviewed at a Committee meeting. After this rough draft has been corrected the



project leader will finalize and prepare a final type. This final type will be circulated to all Committee Members for endorsement on the yellow copy. This yellow copy and original will be submitted to the Director of the Montana Water Resources Board for his signature. After it is signed the original will be sent to the originating agency and the copy will be put into the Environmental file. If additional information is needed the Committee Chairman will make the request to the initiating agency.

2. Environmental Impact Statements (originated by the Montana Water Resources Board). Periodically reports will be made by the Montana Water Resources Board Project Engineer to the Committee for discussion of potential Impact Statement needs. Needs will be suggested by the Committee and submitted to the Director of the Montana Water Resources Board who will make the decisions on Impact Statement preparation. The originator of the project within the Montana Water Resources Board will prepare a rough draft under the direction of his Division Chief. The originating Division Chief will submit a rough draft to the Committee Chairman and a file will be established. The rough draft will be copied for the Committee Members and be placed on the agenda for a Committee meeting. The Committee Members will meet and provide oral and written notes on the Impact Statement and submit to the Division Chief originating the statement. The Division Chief will compile the comments and draft the review for outside agencies, (federal and state). The impact review will be returned from the reviewing agencies within approximately 45 days. Upon the return of these review comments from outside agencies, they will be compiled by the Division Chief and copies made to the Committee. The Committee will meet on the revised statement for review and comment. After these comments are completed the Division Chief will finalize and have the original endorsed by the Committee Members. The endorsed copy will be submitted to the Director of the Montana Water Resources Board for his signature.

3. Environmental Impact of M.W.R.B. Activities

It shall be the duty of the Environmental Coordinating Committee to review the activities of the M.W.R.B. with respect to environmental impact. This may be done at the request of the director of the agency, of a division director, or upon the volition of the Environmental Coordinating Committee, itself.

Because the Environmental Coordinating Committee is an interdisciplinary consulting team of specialists in environmentally related fields, it is well equipped to perform this review process.

The purpose of reviewing the Environmental Impact of M.W.R.B. activities as opposed to (2) above, Environmental Impact statements, is to insure that those M.W.R.B. activities which do in fact have a real or potential environmental impact, but which are not required to submit an Environmental Impact statement, are reviewed.

It is stated in Part A, the general Environmental Policy Statement of this agency, that this agency is committed to sensible uses of Montana's water as it relates to the total environment of the State of Montana. Without carefully and systematically reviewing our own activities for environmental impact, it is impossible to fulfill this commitment.

4. Environmental Policy Statements: The Environmental Coordinating Committee will continually review and update the Montana Water Resources Board Environmental Policy Statement. Final approval shall be made by the Board.

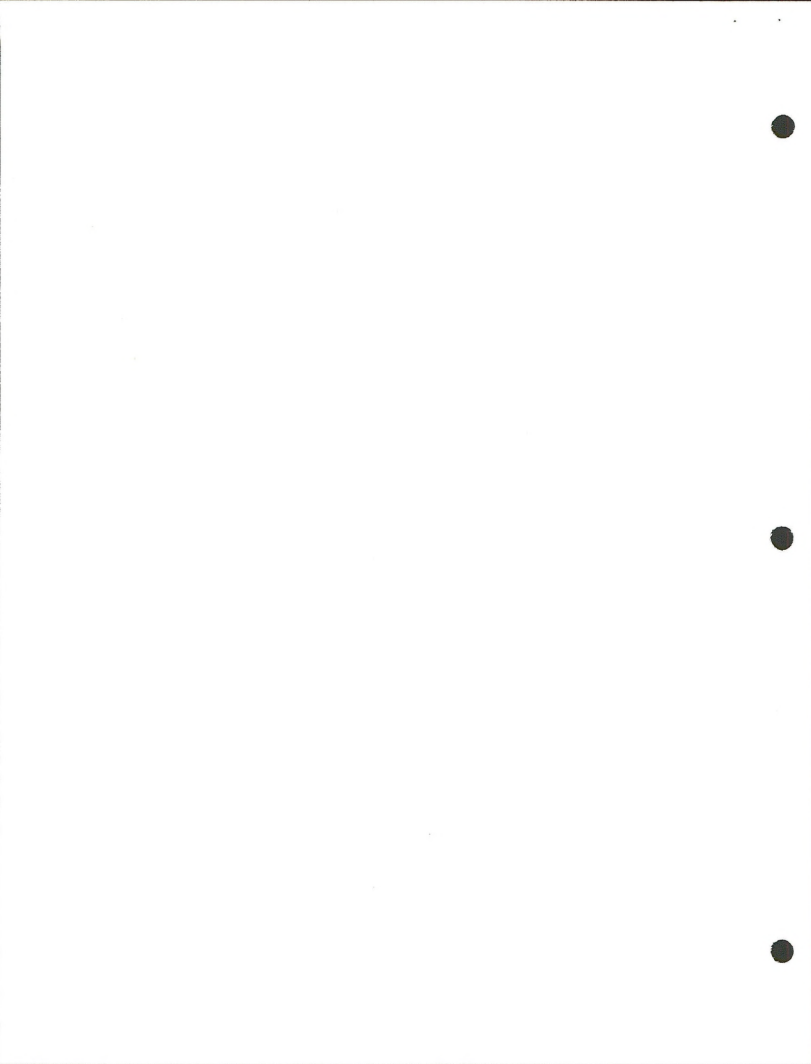
5. Miscellaneous Committee Activities:

A. Environmental Coordinator - Environmental Coordinating Committee shall maintain an Environmental Coordinator. The Environmental Coordinator will act as Committee Chairman and shall have qualifications and experience as noted on his job description. This job description shall be revised as needed.

B. Criteria - Environmental Coordinating Committee will develop and maintain criteria for review and preparing of Environmental Impact Statements and miscellaneous other activities.

C. Mine Land Reclamation Plans - The Environmental Coordinating Committee will review Mine Land Reclamation Plans as submitted to the Montana Water Resources Board as required under Senate Bill 70 - 1971. Administration of this Senate bill is through State Lands. Review of comments will be identically to review of Environmental Impact Statements, only difference being that the Reclamation's Plans will come to the Water Resources Division and then be routed to the Environmental Coordinating Committee.

D. Other activities - Environmental Coordinating Committee will conduct other activities as assigned by the Director of the Montana Water Resources Board.



SECTION 2: ADMINISTRATION OF M. W. R. B. PROJECTS

The Montana Water Resources Board currently administers about 30 water development projects throughout the state. Throughout the years, this agency has been involved in the construction of over 180 projects. Current uses of water which are enhanced by these projects include: irrigation, municipal, recreation, flood control and industrial. Historically this agency has participated with federal, state, local, and private interests in the development of Montana's water. Future expectations include the possibilities of similar cooperative ventures.

Clearly the administration of existing water development projects for any of the above beneficial uses, or any others, can be expected to have a significant effect upon the environment. Likewise, the development of future water project can be expected to provide the potential for significant environmental impact, both in the form of effects during construction, and effects upon completion and normal operation.

WATER QUALITY-ON WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

It shall be the MWRB policy in studying potential projects to evaluate the quality of the water and land resource proposed for development. This would insure that sustained use of the water will be productive and beneficial to the state of Montana. It will also be the policy to consider the possible quality changes that might be expected to occur after development.

For further information, refer to section 8 in Hydrography. Section on water quality monitoring.

RESERVOIR POOL LEVEL AND DOWNSTREAM FLOW REGULATION

Due to many legal constraints, it is necessary in many cases to manage reservoir pool levels to satisfy priority uses of water. To the degree that legal constraints permit, this agency shall manage reservoir pool elevations and downstream flow regulation in a manner which will optimally satisfy all uses of the water, to include recreation, flood control, and water quality.

NATIVE COVER

Native Cover in different parts of Montana means various things; from sand, to cobble, to lichen covered rock, to grass and to trees.

The specific policy of the Montana Water Resources Board shall be to maintain and protect the existing habitat and to rehabilitate development sites in order to guarantee the objective of blending the projects in with their environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY FOR RECREATIONAL USE

Water quality, flow regulation, plant cover, and many other aspects of project management are summed together to describe environmental quality for recreational use. "Recreational use" is used to define not only the normally accepted recreational uses of water, but also aesthetic and quality of life factors. It shall be the policy of this agency to design, construct and manage all existing projects and future projects in a manner which takes into consideration these valuable natural aspects; to enhance the environment, not compete with it. This shall include the utilization of tools developed by the Montana Water Resources Board and other state and federal agencies such as the "Montana Outdoor Recreation Plan".

CABIN SITE DEVELOPMENTS

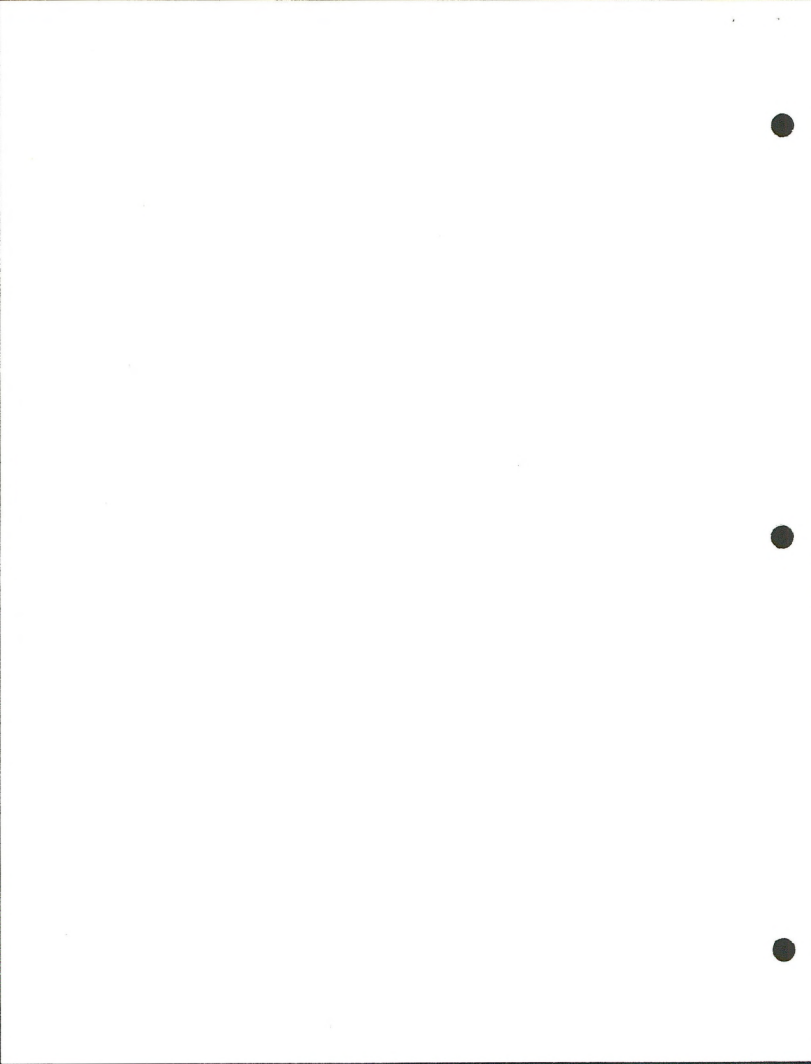
It has been the policy of this agency to provide private persons with permission to develop cabin-sites on property owned by this agency and adjacent to a water project. The current and future policy of this agency regarding this alternative use of the land and the water is to grant that permission only when it has been economically and environmentally shown that such permission does not violate the public trust associated with the management of our water resources. The general policy shall be that Montana Water Resources Board projects constitute public property, and as such are best utilized to generate the optimal social benefit.

OPEN SPACE

In recent years Montana has experienced a marked increase in development adjacent to bodies of water. It is the policy of the Montana Water Resources Board that undeveloped open spaces are of a socially beneficial nature, and their maintenance and enhancement is encouraged.

INPUT FROM WATER USERS, INTERESTED CITIZENS, AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

It shall be a continuing goal in project management to solicit input information to assist in the management of our projects from any and all relevant sources, to include water users, interested citizens, and governmental agencies.



Historically very little information has been available as to the scope and nature of the various beneficial uses of water and related land resources linked to Montana Water Resources Board projects. It shall be the policy of this agency to initiate and continue a census of information as to the types and levels of use of M.W.R.B. projects. .

SECTION 3: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

With the enactment of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), Montana has been able to take a positive approach towards historic preservation.

The Montana Water Resources Board considers that the preservation of meaningful historic sites, structures, remains, and objects stems from an intrinsic need to imprint in the minds of this and future generations - the inspirational values, sense of history, and appreciation of accomplishments, hardships, adversities, adventures, and hopes of those who have gone before us.

The Board believes that it is responsible to insure that these values remain to the highest degree as matters essential to proper protection and development of its sites. Interpretation and public use of historic sites should be viewed as an integral part of master development plans.

It is the policy of the Board to study development areas, in advance of actual construction activities, to determine any potential adverse historical impact of these operations.

The discovery of possibly valuable historical findings will be reported to the Chairman, Environmental Coordinating Committee who will, in turn, determine the proper action to be taken. In this way individuals, appropriate societies and governmental agencies will be involved for the careful research and documentation which is necessary for meaningful historical preservation.



SECTION 4: PERSONNEL FIELD ACTIVITIES

All Montana Water Resources Board personnel should be concerned about environmental protection and strongly consider ecological implications of their work.

The general field (where field refers to any activities which entail a Water Resources Board employee leaving the Helena area) policy for the Montana Water Resources Board shall be as follows:

While in the field, all Water Resources Board personnel will conscientiously improve, protect, and preserve the natural environment. Furthermore they should, at all times, remember that any thoughtless action against the environment not only reflects upon the image of the Board, but also can result in a negative environmental impact.

Employees will report any potential or actual instances of pollution or other ecological impairment to the Chairman of the Environmental Coordinating Committee. Examples of this would be a case of groundwater contamination or an obstruction in an obvious flood zone.

At all times, ash trays, trash receptacles, litter bags and other means of proper disposal will be used.

Employees will refrain from driving through plowed and planted fields unless they have the landowners direction and permission and then only with due cause.

When an employee is issued a vehicle for an extended period of time (e.g. one month), he will make certain that it is maintained in good working order, per State Motor Pool requirements.

Proper judgment should be made as to routes used to and from work areas with respect to topography, land use, climate, and type of vehicle used.

Employees will be cognizant of the Montana Water Resources Board historic preservation policy and will act according to its provisions.



SECTION 5 GROUNDWATER

I. The Montana Water Resources Board has a definite role in the management of the groundwater resources of Montana. This agency administers the groundwater code which is an act relating to and providing for the appropriation and regulation of groundwater. According to the Montana Water Resources Act of 1967, this agency is responsible for the formulation of a comprehensive multiple use plan for all Montana water. The Montana Environmental Policy Act of 1967 is our mandate to administer policies that would prevent or eliminate harm to the groundwater environment. The Water Board participates in and coordinates groundwater research in this state. In order to stimulate economic growth through development of water resources, this agency publishes groundwater and surface water information in the Water Resources Survey series. Finally, under the Water Pollution Control Act of 1971, the director of this agency serves as a member of the Water Pollution Advisory Council in which capacity he advises the Board of Health about problems of underground water pollution. Clearly this agency is involved in many aspects of the groundwater environment.

II. It is a general policy of the Montana Water Resources Board to encourage socially efficient uses of groundwater, so that socially inefficient water management decisions are avoided. More precisely this agency endeavors to maintain the quality as well as quantity of our groundwater resources.

III. A specific policy of this agency shall be as follows:

1. The Groundwater Code. The administration of the groundwater code and of any present and future controlled groundwater district will encourage the socially efficient use of the groundwater resource. As changes are foreseen in the groundwater code there is potentially a much greater role for this agency in the management of the groundwater resource.

2. Water Resources Act. In the formulation and implementation of the State Water Plan and other sections of this act, this agency will make every effort to manage and coordinate groundwater use, development, and preservation, so that unwise irreversible decisions affecting our water resources are not made. Essential to wise resource use is the concept of optimal social efficiency. This concept will be considered in all groundwater resource planning.

3. Environmental Policy Act. This agency is directed by the Montana Environmental Policy Act to "...promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment...." Through this mandate we administer policies that should prevent or eliminate harm to the groundwater environment.

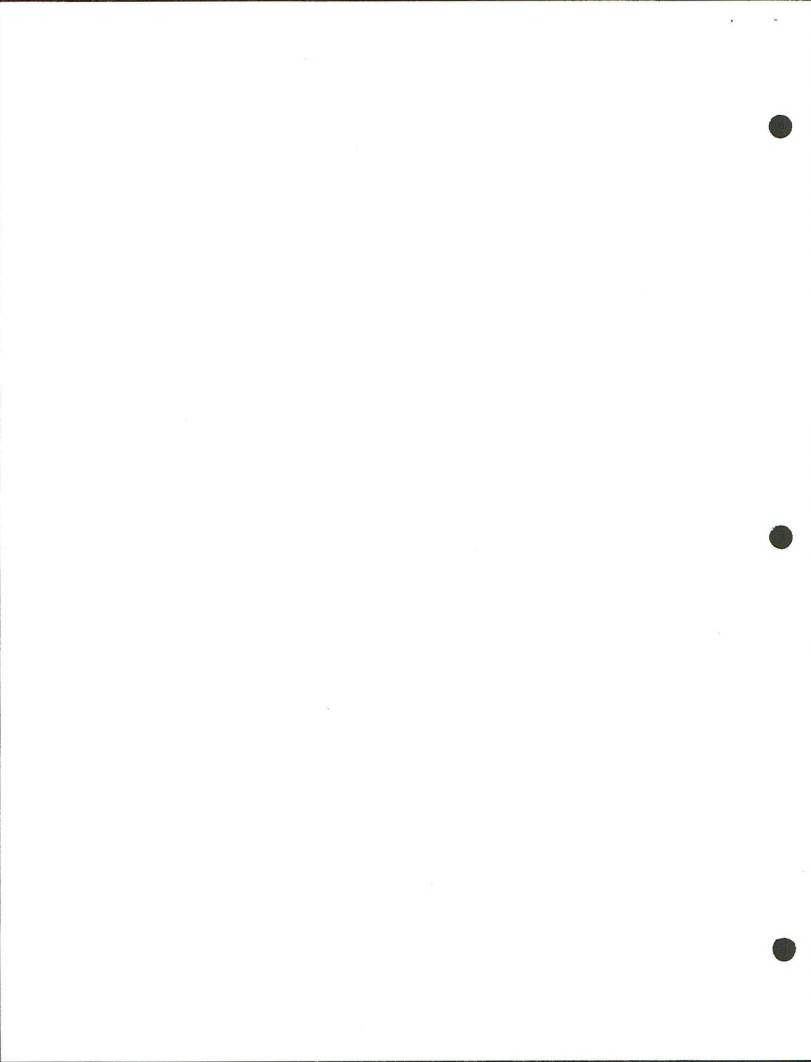
4. Groundwater Research. It is a specific policy of this agency to encourage research for the development, conservation, and use of our groundwater resources.

1/ The concept of social efficiency, as used here, is discussed in the Appendix.

A compilation and analysis of groundwater information can be used in the State Water Plan and by both public and private sectors of our society.

5. Water Resources Survey. This agency publishes groundwater information in these county publications in order to help develop this groundwater resource.

6. Water Pollution Control Act. Although the role of the director of this agency in this act is purely advisory, he will guide his activities by the general principle of social efficiency.



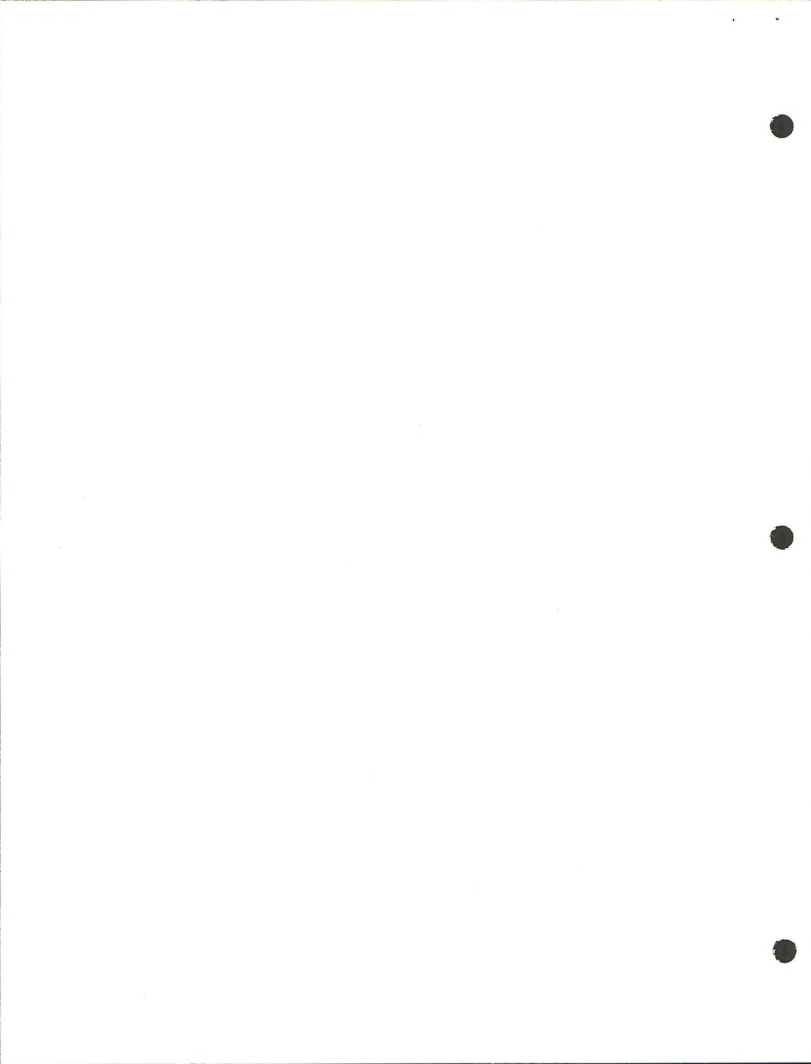
SECTION 6: STATE WATER PLAN

The Montana Water Resources Board recognizes environmental pollution as a major concern in all planning activities. All activities of planning personnel will recognize the need for Montana to correct abuses to its water resources. A program of mutual assistance will be sought in all relations with responsible state and federal agencies and with individuals in their efforts for determining the causes of water quality and soil degradation and in quantifying pollution contributions from all sources.

Wise environmental management practices will be recognized in all irrigation planning. The chief pollutant is salinity; salts that accumulate on irrigated land are one of the chief deterrents to crop production in the west. Land classification and water quality studies are being made to minimize this problem. Excessive water runoff from agricultural land, suburban areas, and mineral development cause sedimentation, excessive pollution, animal and plant residue, and undesirable chemicals to enter streams and lakes. The Board will cooperate and assist in identifying and preventing these pollutants from deteriorating the environment.

The improvement and protection of groundwater for domestic, municipal, industrial and agricultural uses will receive major consideration in all planning.

In view of these problems, it is the policy of the Montana Water Resources Board to consider all aspects of environmental consideration in the development of the State Water Plan. From the smallest subbasin to the largest basin, environmental impact will be determined for every plan and alternative, whether the plan be for development or non-development.



SECTION 7: WEATHER MODIFICATION

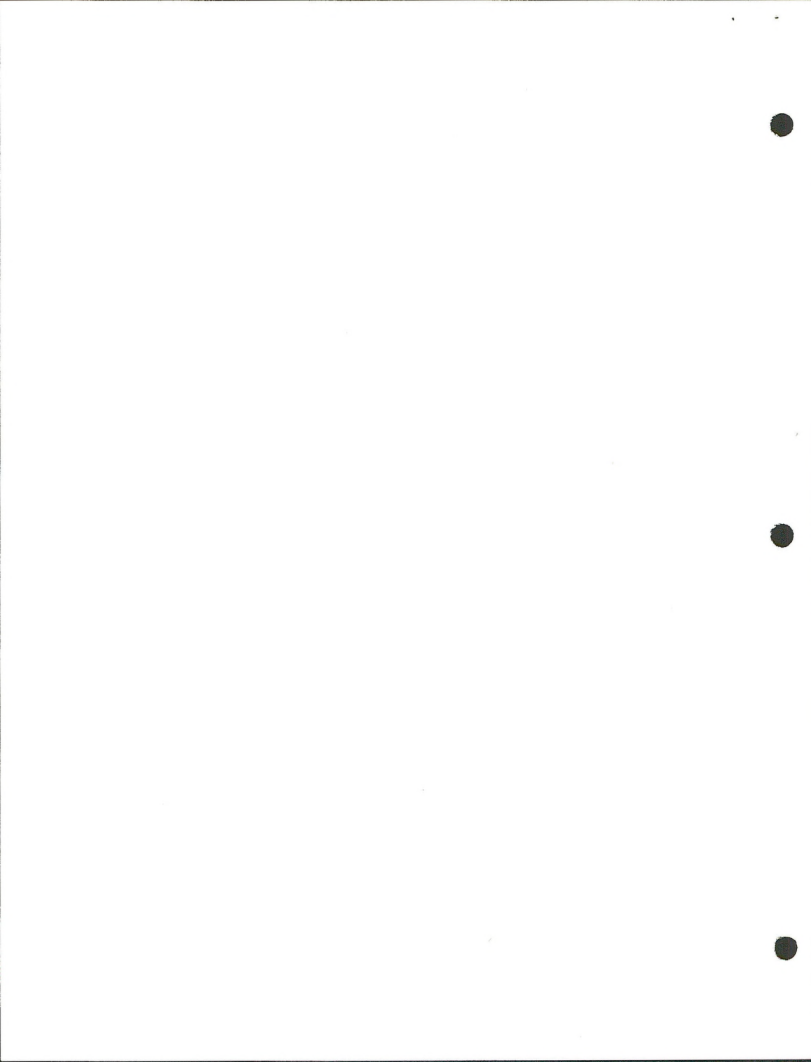
The Montana Water Resources Board is involved in the field of weather modification through the Weather Modification Act of 1967 in Section 89, Chapter 3 of the Revised Codes of Montana. This agency is solely responsible for the administration of this act.

It is the responsibility of this agency to grant licenses and permits to all weather modification activities in the state. Due to this responsibility in the administration of the Weather Modification Act, we are currently involved in research relating to weather modification. This agency has expertise in weather modification through its Weather Modification Advisory Council. In the future, it is foreseeable with outside funding that this agency may be involved in applied weather modification operations.

It is the policy of this agency to encourage activities in weather modification where they can be shown to be socially efficient.¹ This agency encourages research into atmospheric sciences and the effects of weather modification.

The permit law requires open public hearings and published legal notices. In addition to this our agency requires, as a matter of policy, an environmental impact statement for each weather modification operation before this agency will issue a permit.

1/ The concept of social efficiency, as used here, is discussed in the Appendix.



SECTION 8: HYDROGRAPHY

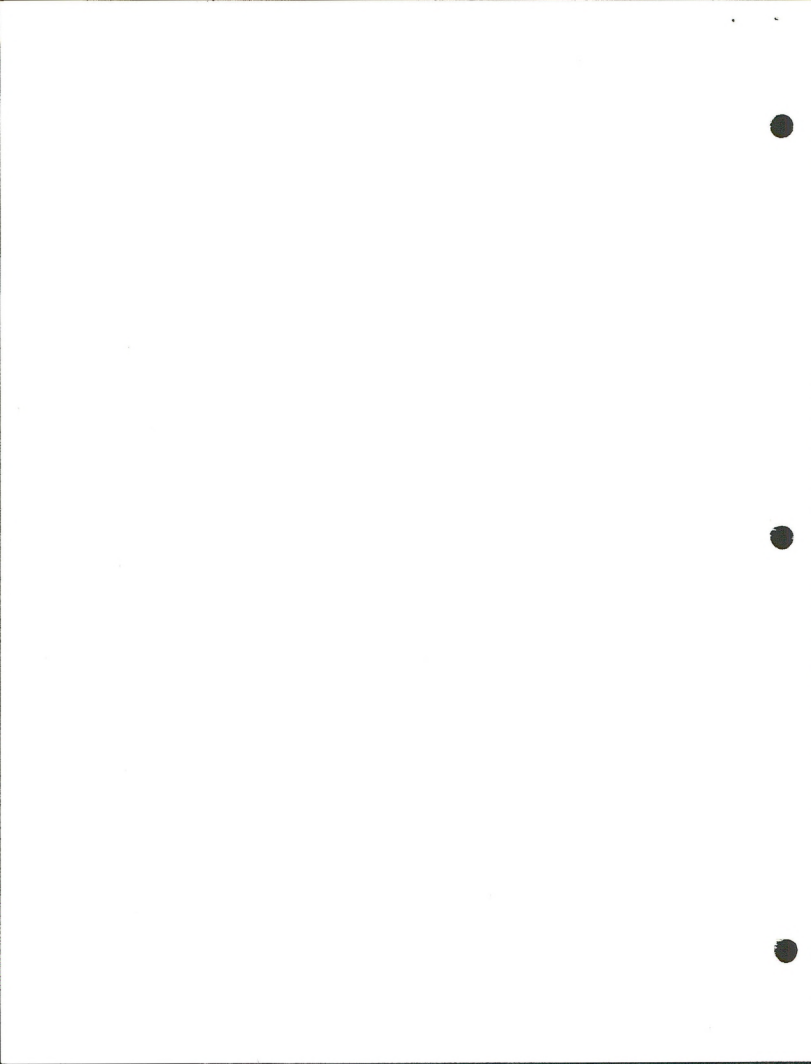
The gauging stations that the MWRB operates are of vital importance to the Water Resources Program. The MWRB's general policy is to maintain and operate gauging stations, to obtain stream flow and to encourage water quality monitoring.

The MWRB uses stream flow records for the efficient management of its reservoirs. By using stream flow data, precipitation records and snow forecasts, a reservoir management program can be followed. This program helps to conserve water, reduces erosion and serves as a control of flooding.

Gauging stations are also located on some of the streams and major rivers of the state. The MWRB has a cooperative program with the U. S. G. S. for the collection of stream flow records. This data is used in the state water plan for uses such as determining the beneficial uses of water in the state. The data collected from stream flow gauging stations is also used in flood routing for zoning, as well as other uses such as data for reservoir capacity design.

The gauging stations themselves are painted to blend in with the environment. They are usually out of the main line of sight and have a low profile so as to blend into the surrounding scenery.

It is suggested that the Montana Water Resources Board shall encourage a Pilot Water Quality Monitoring Program as finances shall allow, or as conditions should dictate. Water quality shall be monitored as required on a particular area such as where water enters into a project, as it is stored, as it is used, and as it is returned to a flowing stream upon the completion of its use. Water Quality shall be defined as those variables relating to chemical, physical, and biological parameters, requiring monitoring a particular area. Water quality shall be considered for all beneficial uses, not just the major use. Fishery habitat, recreational use, and aesthetic values, for example, shall be considered in water quality studies.

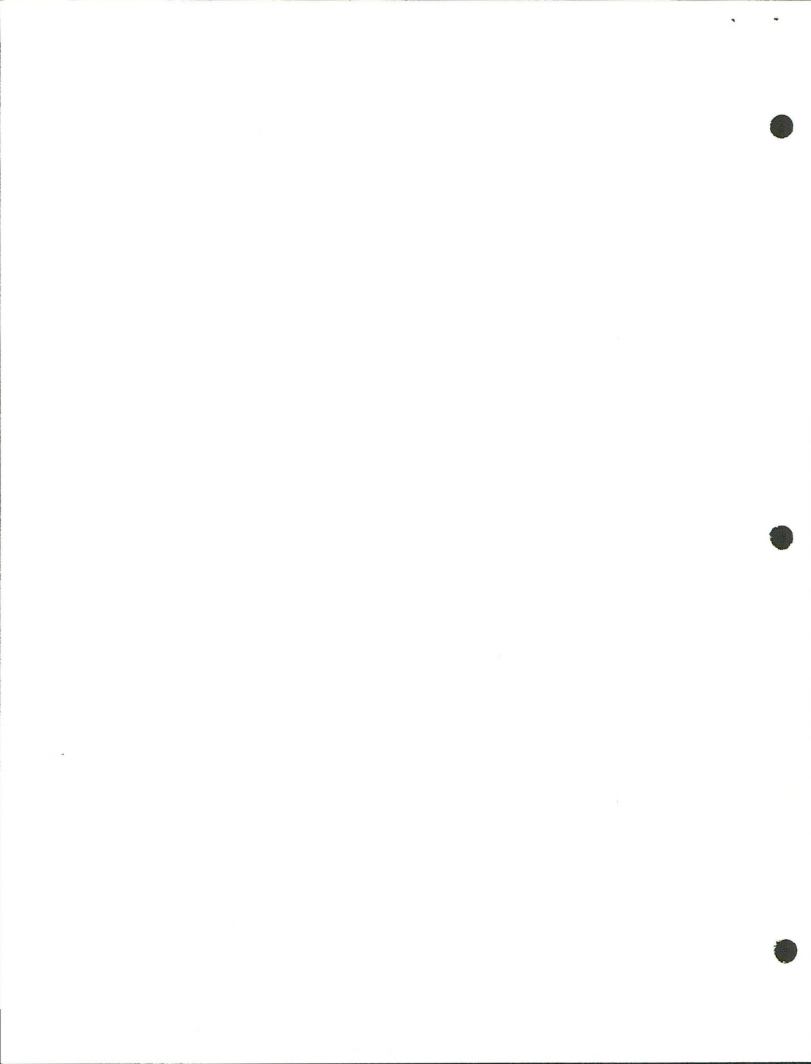


C. APPENDIX

SECTION 1: A DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL EFFICIENCY

Social efficiency as used in this policy statement is a measure of efficiency which includes all of the costs and all of the benefits, regardless of an exchange of money. In using the concept of social efficiency, the intent is to define a measure of efficiency which is broader than the often narrowly used concept of economic efficiency. In other words, by specifying that social efficiency is to be a decision-making criterion, the decision-maker is saying that he wants to include all the costs and all the benefits associated with a particular course of action. The applied concept of social efficiency allows the decision-maker the flexibility to consider each decision on its own merits.

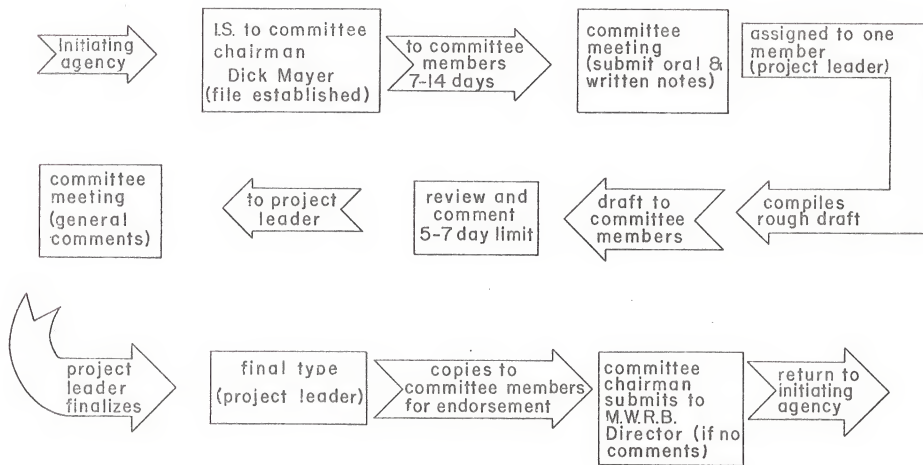
The inclusion of a criterion of social efficiency is in no way meant to modify the existing institutions which describe the decision process. It is the sincere hope of the Montana Water Resources Board that by applying the concept of social efficiency, the decision-maker will be provided with more complete information in a format which compares the relevant differences between alternatives.

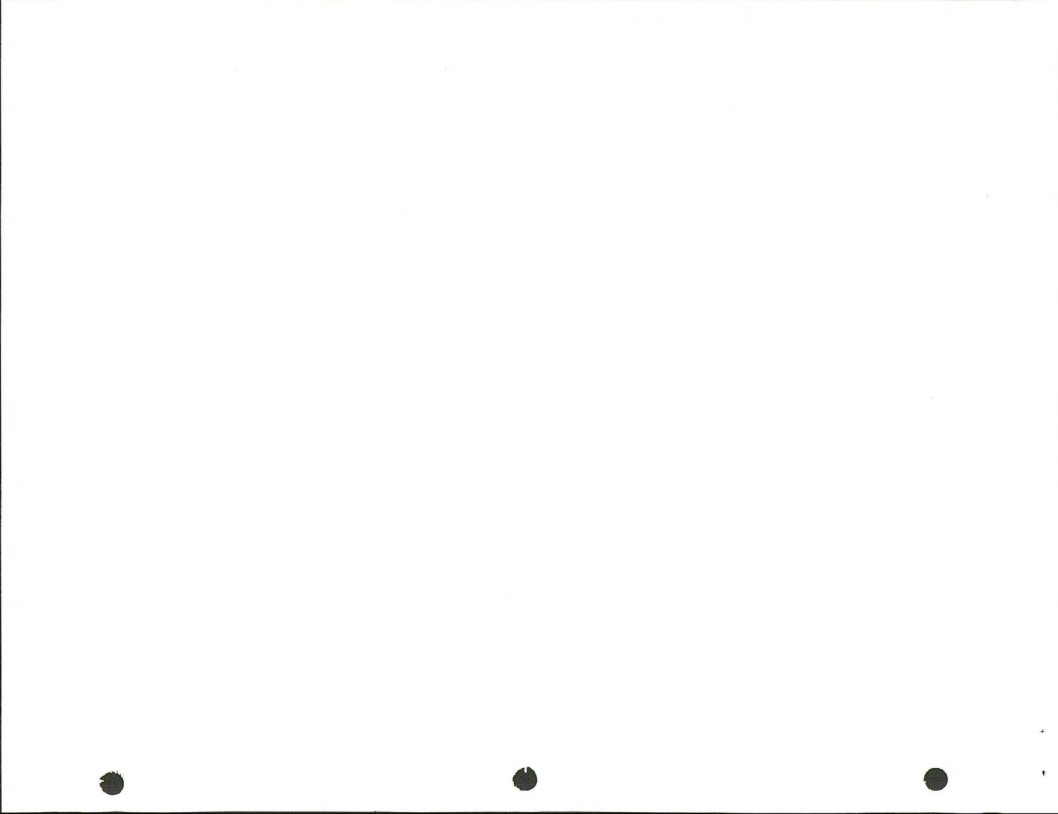


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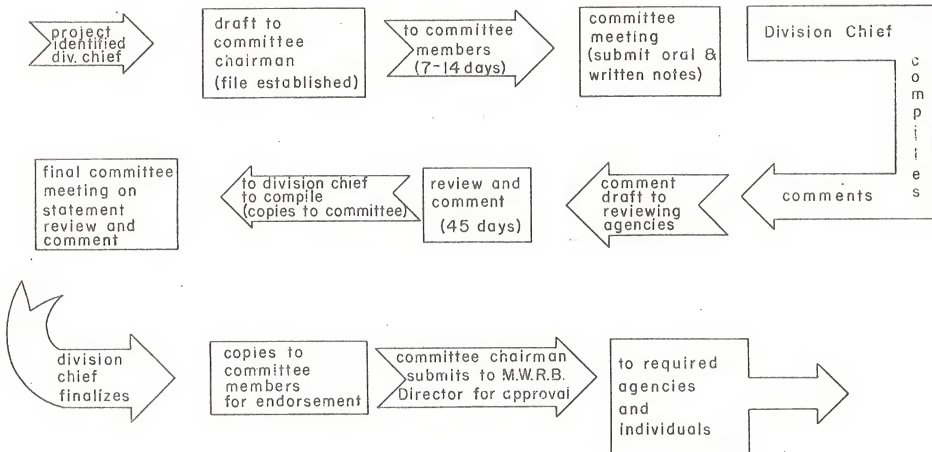
Flow Chart: Environmental Impact Statements

I.S.= Impact Statement





(Outgoing) Flow Chart: Environmental Impact Statements



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